

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 075176

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, EAID, RO

SUBJECT: HIRC HEARING ON AID TO ROMANIA, APRIL 4

1. DEPARTMENT COUNSELOR-DESIGNATE MATTHEW NIMETZ TESTIFIED IN SUPPORT OF DOLLARS 20 MILLION IN EARTHQUAKE AID FOR ROMANIA BEFORE FULL HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 4. ALSO ON ADMINISTRATION PANEL WERE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE, DIRECTOR OF AID OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE ANDERSON AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS JENKINS.

2. MORE THAN 14 COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATED, AND EXTENSIVE QUESTIONING NECESSITATED HEARING TO BE SUSPENDED BEFORE CONCLUSION. IT WILL RESUME MORNING OF APRIL 5.
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3. QUESTIONING WAS GENERALLY POSITIVE IN THAT MOST MEMBERS APPEAR TO FAVOR SOME RELIEF/REHABILITATION AID TO ROMANIA. HOWEVER, SEVERAL MEMBERS, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI, MADE VERY CLEAR THAT INTENT OF CONGRESS IS FOR ASSISTANCE FUNDS TO BE USED PRIMARILY TO MEET HUMANITARIAN NEEDS, NOT AS A SIMPLE CASH TRANSFER TO BE USED BY GOR

IN SUPPLEMENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. COMMITTEE MEMBERS ALSO QUESTIONED ROMANIA'S PERFORMANCE ON HUMAN

RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN MATTERS, WITH COMMITTEE MEMBER FASCELL ASKING WHETHER OUR HUMANITARIAN AID SHOULD NOT BE LINKED TO RECIPROCAL HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS ON PART OF GOR. NIMETZ ARGUED THAT FURTHER AID TO ROMANIA WOULD GIVE US AN ADDITIONAL OPENING TO DISCUSS HUMANITARIAN MATTERS WITH ROMANIA.

4. CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI APPEARED CONFIDENT OF FULL COMMITTEE ACTION ON HOUSE BILL APRIL 5, ALTHOUGH THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME POSSIBILITY THAT AMOUNT AUTHORIZED MAY BE REDUCED TO DOLLARS 20 MILLION, WHICH IS AMOUNT ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS.

5. IN A RELATED MATTER, ON APRIL 4 THE JOINT APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE KNOCKED OUT THE DOLLARS 10 MILLION FOR AID TO ROMANIA AUTHORIZED APRIL 1 BY THE SENATE FROM THE SECOND FY-77 APPROPRIATIONS SUPPLEMENTAL BILL. REASON FOR THIS ACTION SEEMS MORE RELATED TO ABSENCE FROM THE CONFERENCE OF MEMBERS FAMILIAR WITH THE TWO PENDING BILLS FOR AID TO ROMANIA THAN TO OPPOSITION TO FURTHER GRANT AID TO ROMANIA PER SE. (IT WOULD BE HIGHLY UNUSUAL FOR CONGRESS TO VOTE AN APPROPRIATION PRIOR TO PASSAGE OF AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION.) WHILE THIS DEVELOPMENT MAY DELAY APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS, THERE IS STILL GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT FY-1977 FUNDS MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE FAIRLY SOON. WE WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED AS THE CONFIDENTIAL

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